



# CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Meeting Minutes  
May 11, 2026

Mayor Primmer called the City Council work session meeting to order at 6:00pm. Present were Councilors Hayward, Roberts, Myers, McCarthy, Duron, Kelso, and Barron. City Staff in attendance included: City Manager Byron Smith, Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan, City Attorney Richard Tovey, Finance Director Ignacio Palacios, Police Chief Jason Edmiston, City Planner Clint Spencer, Parks and Recreation Director Brandon Artz, and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong.

## **Carnegie Library Proposed Uses**

### **Hermiston Historical & Cultural Society**

Steve Meyers representing the Hermiston Historical & Cultural Society (the Society) thanked the Council for allowing him the opportunity to present and recognize founding members in the audience Dennis and Anne Doherty. Mr. Meyers stated the Society presented information to the Council three years prior asking for the opportunity to convert the Carnegie Library into a Traveling Art and History Museum, in the months after the presentation, the Society received \$10,000 each from the Wildhorse Foundation and Amazon to create a website, which has been completed, and build a conceptual plan for the interior of the Carnegie Library. Although there has been some pause from the Society, the City has continued to move forward with receiving a grant for the remodel of the building, obtaining community surveys regarding preferred future use of the building, and the Council's willingness to hear potential use proposals. Many communities along the I-84 corridor have communities with buildings that are still standing after 150 years and have museums displaying their history; likewise, Hermiston's neighboring communities in Heppner, Pendleton, Echo, Umatilla, Boardman, and others also have traditional museums and other uniquely focused centers. Many may believe that Hermiston does not need this amenity because our neighbors have these structures, however, none of them are telling our story which is unique, compelling, and inspiring, which has developed Hermiston into a premier community in Eastern Oregon and is to invaluable to not only share so this knowledge continues to live on about our history but also about the people who established Hermiston and made it into the community it is today, like: EP Dode, Joe Burns, Russ Dorran, Dorris Bounds, and Bill Warner, these are all hidden figures that shouldn't be forgotten, including the business community like Lamb-Weston that was founded in Hermiston and is now one of the world wide leaders in potato products.

Mayor Primmer asked Mr. Meyers what his vision of the space would be and if he would be open to sharing the space with another organization.

Mr. Meyers stated his vision may be different from the other members' but would incorporate a travel history and art center utilizing the top level of the building with flexible design furniture to make the space versatile; he isn't completely sure about the design space for the basement level but believes there is plenty of room to share the building. The Society would also propose a partnership with the City to develop an Oversight Committee with City and Community Members to build a conceptual design plan for the building using the \$14,000 left in the Society's matching grant funds.

(Handout Attached)



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### **Hermiston Amateur Radio Club**

Hermiston Amateur Radio Club (the HARC) President Sam Vore thanked the Council for their dedicated time serving the community in this way and asked that the Council consider allowing the HARC to use the Carnegie Library's basement east room and part of the main level for a larger meeting space able to accommodate about 30 people. The main level meeting space would not only be for the HARC's use, but for community use as well. Mr. Vore stated the HARC has 32 members with a wide variety of communication interests with the overall goal of providing a fixed location where the HARC can conduct meetings, host workshops, and with two main points in their mission:

Mission One: To Reach and Teach. This is done through STEM education and career access for scholarships and hands-on experience, creating relationships that school groups and anyone, at any age, who has an interest in this field can access as this group globally promotes diversity, as well as through the American Radio Relay League, Oregon Section. Held annually, globally, there are youth events that test radio operators' ability to set up a station and be able to communicate. This year's winter competition was held at EOTEC. It is also a great way for children and youth to come to these events and be able to see and touch equipment, ask questions, and discuss what radio is all about and how two-way radio is still applicable today. This also aligns with the 2025 City Council Goals for Community Engagement.

Mission two: To be a Communication Asset to the City of Hermiston. This is done by being a supplemental emergency communication asset as the building's proximity to City Hall is ideal in case of a natural or manmade emergency. the City would gain direct communication access to FEMA, Emergency Operation Centers within Umatilla and Morrow County and to the west-side of the state, as well as hospitals to include Good Shepherd and St. Anthony's in Pendleton and other government agencies. The Pendleton's Amateur Radio Club also focuses on emergency services having weekly meetings and tests that activate during severe weather and gives real time data to the local weather service. The Club was able to help with the search of a missing woman and previous floods. When there are no other ways to reach people, two-radio is the solution.

Mr. Vore stated HARC's proposal does not require any City expenditures as all services are free to the community and City of Hermiston. Any updates to the building would be paid for with donations and the antenna placement would not interfere with the historic preservation of the building. AWS has been very generous with donations focused on community programs. Although the basement's east room is preferable and space to accommodate a group of 30 for meetings, HARC would be grateful for any space in the basement. HAM amateur radio, is not something of the past, it continues to be an asset in our present and future and it's important to find new more efficient ways to be enthusiastic about this technology as radios are used by first responders, astronauts, the railroad, excited kids on Christmas using their two way radios for the first time, and for many other uses. Mr. Vore expressed HARC's excitement for the possibility to have a home base.

Councilors asked a variety of questions regarding why the HARC chose Carnegie Library as a potential home base and what other infrastructure would be needed for the HARC to be successful in this building.



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Mr. Vore stated Carnegie was selected because it was an available space but also because it fits into the City's Goals and community surveys received, finding that the location was also a benefit to the City. HARC may need more power circuits and backup power, but HARC has the flexibility to use batteries and backup generators or the like, but that can be established if we move forward with this proposal.

Councilors Duron and Myers expressed interest in staff hosting a meeting with all Carnegie presenters to see if there was a way that all ideas could be incorporated in the building.

Councilors Barron, McCarthy, Roberts, Linton, and Kelso disagreed stating space was too limited to be able to incorporate all ideas, but felt that the space could more appropriately incorporate a museum, art center, and radio club.

After additional discussion and answering questions from the Council, City Manager Byron Smith stated staff would reach out to all presenters for a joint meeting and present findings with potential recommendations at or after the second meeting in June.

#### **Adjournment**

Mayor Primmer ended the work session at 6:55pm and stated the City Council would convene for their regular council meeting at 7:00pm.

# The Hermiston Carnegie Library

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Using a grant in 1915, the Hermiston Carnegie Library was designed by Portland architect Folger Johnson, the architect for seven Carnegie libraries in Oregon. Three are on the National Register: the **Gresham Library**, now Gresham Historical Museum, 1913; the **Umatilla County Library**, now Pendleton Center for the Arts, 1916; and the **Arleta Library** in Portland, 1918. Other Carnegie Libraries on the National Register: **Hood River, The Dalles, Baker City, Enterprise, Oregon City, Medford, Marshfield, La Grande (pending)**

## Hermiston Historical and Culture Society

501(c)(3) organization, formed in July 2022 as one of Oregon’s arts, heritage and humanities nonprofits. Our organization brings

- Non-profit status
- Hermistonmuseum.org website for stories, photos, documents
- Grant funding to create a conceptual plan for a history and arts center, provided by Wildhorse Foundation and Amazon

### A 501(c)(3) nonprofit offers several advantages:

#### Tax benefits

- Exempt from income tax on money related to your mission
- Donors can deduct contributions on their taxes, making fundraising easier

#### Fundraising advantages

- Eligible to apply for foundation grants, which are generally unavailable to for-profits
- Access to government grants at federal, state, and local levels
- Donors are more willing to give generously when they get a tax deduction

#### Credibility and trust

- IRS recognition signals legitimacy and accountability to the public
- Required to file Form 990, which builds donor confidence
- Easier to attract board members, volunteers, and institutional partners

### There are about 1,700 nonprofits listed with the Oregon Cultural Trust

Hood River – 14  
The Dalles – 18  
Hermiston – 2

Pendleton – 15  
La Grande – 9

## Who will benefit from a Hermiston history and arts center?

- Citizens who believe historical preservation is crucial to community enrichment
- Teachers and parents who help instill pride in children about their local heritage
- Economic development specialists who promote and present Hermiston

## What is the Story of Hermiston?

**Prehistory** – Ice Age Missoula floods and regional geology.

**Tribal Traditions** – The history and culture of the people who have lived on the land for more than 10,000 years, including present-day perspectives.

**Pioneer and Early Trails** – Lewis & Clark, Oregon Trail and tribal trails each cut a path through our area.

**Early Hermiston** – Settling Hermiston; the establishment of the Bureau of Reclamation's Hermiston irrigation project as one of the first in the West; early hospitals, utilities and railroads.

**People Power** Profiles of founders and other citizens who built Hermiston, yesterday and today. Profiles of businesses, churches and other organizations.

**The Sporting Life** – Sporting activities, school and community, through the century.

**School Days** – The people and places that shaped our youth, from the Sandstone School onward.

**The Carnegie Building** – Granted in 1915, a building funded by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie served as Hermiston's city library until 1989.

**Coming of Ordnance** – In the months preceding World War II, 7,000 workers descended on a town of 800 to build an Army ammunition depot.

**McNary Dam** – With construction beginning in 1947, the dam today provides for navigation, flood control, hydropower, recreation, wildlife habitat and irrigation.

**The Irrigated Agriculture Revolution** – The establishment of center pivot irrigation and coming of Lamb Weston in the 1970s triggered the multi-billion industry of today.

**Multi-Cultural Influences** – From early settlers to the multi-cultural community of today, the populations that have influenced our history and contemporary life.

**Hermiston Today** – The expansion of data centers, irrigated agriculture, medical facilities, transportation and other investments that influence and enrich a growing community.

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*Hermiston Historical and Culture Society - Contact us at [info@hermistonmuseum.org](mailto:info@hermistonmuseum.org)*